



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

the class exercise serves as a deadening of their best sensibilities and enthusiasms; one-fourth of the class are not capable of comprehending or performing the task in hand, but sit listless and helpless and rightly regard themselves as unjustly abused; the members of the remaining half of the class represent a variety of conditions, but most of them are capable of profiting to some extent by the exercise.

"(6) One argument against the present plan on the part of those who have not tried it is that it is a hardship for the poor student. It must be clear from the preceding that the situation is quite the converse. It means kindness, comfort, justice, and relative efficiency for the poor student. It gives the poor student a fair chance, which the old system does not.

"(7) This classification serves as a means of discovering and encouraging the good and superior student; first, because there is throughout the course a vital and effective competition; second, because in this competition each student is working at his highest level; third, because this enables the high student to profit by the opportunity for initiative, freedom, expansion, and self-expression; and, fourth, because such associations are likely to awaken in him desire for progress, a sense of joy in achievement, and a feeling of fellowship...

"The plea for this method of sectioning on the basis of ability is thus presented by one who is confessedly an enthusiast for the method, having used it for several years with large sections in psychology, and having actually found means of overcoming obstacles in the way. It would, however, not be unreasonable to say that opposition to the plan can, after all, be most fairly presented only by one who has actually put it to experiment and has arrived at an adverse conclusion. At the present time I know of no one who has qualified for that task. Let us therefore apply a principle of science and, before we render a verdict on the plan, 'try it.' "

C. E. SEASHORE, in *School and Society*.

THE HUMANITIES AND THE TREND OF EDUCATION.—"Would it not be well if all our students—not only those who take the A.B. course and those in the Ph.B. group whose studies are in classical or modern literatures, but also those in the Ph.B. work who have specialized in economics and the social sciences, and all the science students—would it not be well, I ask, if they could have some of

this humanistic study? Not that I would suggest that they should love their science or their economics less, but that they should love literature and art a little more. Are they really educated if they leave our halls without an intelligent understanding of the significance of literature, whether they choose Greek or Latin, French, German, Italian, or English as the medium through which to attain that end? If they go out without it, what is to distinguish them from the graduates of any technical school or commercial college? Might there not be at least one course in art where there are a dozen in accounting? Will our graduates and will the graduates of other colleges and universities join the ranks of those who raise the standard of their community's culture? Or will they belong to the great mass of those who become absorbed in their own individual pursuits and never even get a glimpse, over the edge of the pit in which they are working, of those larger issues which make life worth living? .

"The tendency of our age indeed is crassly materialistic, and it is this that in the main is determining the character of our education. In my distant youth I remember having a vague impression that the university dictated to the colleges and the colleges to the schools, and that the whole complex of educational institutions directed the thought of the country. Under the domination of this idea I pictured the very venerable gentleman who was the president of the university where I was a student as a kind of academic pope, whose word in all intellectual matters was law, who was infallible, who could make and unmake curricula, and whose hand guided the destinies of his university and through it the thought of the province. It is a long time since I awoke from that dream, and with my waking came the realization that far from showing the way, the educational institutions simply trail on behind. Perhaps that misguided idea of mine would never have been born if I had not belonged to a generation in which there were college entrance requirements, and colleges and universities did maintain some pretension of controlling the course of study in the schools. But that state of things has long since gone in the West, and is going fast in the East. No, it is not the university that is the head of that chimera which we call education. It is the local school board that is head, for it determines what shall be taught in the grade and high schools, and the schools swing the colleges and universities. The university is the monster's tail, which wags far too contentedly at its master's voice. But it

may be urged: 'This is just as it should be. We are a democracy, and our educational system from grade school to university, from kindergarten to doctorate, should embody the standards of the people and should reflect their ideas.' This argument is not without plausibility; it is from some points of view logical enough. But like all theories based on the wishes of the people it does not always work out well. There have been many high-minded members of school boards, men whose idealism yielded to that of none, and the debt that American education owes to them is too vast for measurement. It is to them that we who are teachers of the humanities are indebted for everything we have. If it had not been for them, the study of literature, either in our own or in foreign languages, would never have been made a constituent part of the curriculum. It was they who put the classics into the schools of the eastern states in the early days, and the schools established in the West modeled their courses on the eastern foundations. There was in those far-off times a genuine respect for learning, and those who organized the courses provided not only studies of the bread-and-butter sort but also those that would enlarge the vision of the students, give them some idea of the civilizations that had flourished and passed, yet had not passed without leaving some heritage; studies that would enable even the most mediocre student to see his own age in juster perspective and take a more comprehensive, a more intelligent, and a more enlightened view of the conditions of life in his own day and generation—studies that would minister to his imagination also and give him at least a chance to develop an appreciation for what was fine in literature and art. Nor were those early New Englanders dreamers. Good business men everyone knows them to have been. But they were not merely business men, and in the schools they built they provided for more than commercial efficiency. The test of any system is its results, and you will remember that what is best in American literature was the product of the old literary courses. But men of this kind, whose minds see beyond the immediate present, who realize that a boy's education must provide not only for the first few years of his business life but for all those many years that follow, men who have range and idealism of the right sort, are now in the minority. The majority consists of individuals who have succumbed to that materialism of which I have spoken. It is they who ultimately control educational policy and make the curriculum, and the

curriculum more and more reflects this baleful materialistic tendency . . .

"The pest of our civilization, then, is the cry for practical efficiency. We are in a fair way to being ruined by our efficiency. The term itself is a good one; the idea is an excellent one. Where the trouble lies is in the interpretation of it. For 'practical' is mere camouflage for 'immediate,' and our whole educational system is crowded (and the congestion is increasing every day) with short-cuts to this or that type of proficiency. Of that short-cut to business success which is now devastating our high-school course, and which is filling business houses with boys with permanently crippled minds, I have already spoken. But the movement has not stopped at the high school. In many of our colleges and universities the schools of commerce and administration are literally devouring the college of liberal arts. This camel put its head into the college tent a generation ago when courses in political economy became a regular part of the curriculum and presently it will be the sole occupant. Students are crowding into the commercial classes, for they are convinced that they are killing two birds with one stone: they are getting a college degree and they are acquiring a training in what they regard as the only things of any value to them. On this latter point their minds are fully made up. To their untutored intelligence only that study which has immediate bearing on money-making is useful. That they should have this opinion is not of course surprising. It is a quality of youth and immaturity. It is as natural, at their time of life, as the down upon a freshman's cheek, or the noise and horse-play of a fraternity house, or the smart chatter of a sophomore, or the loose slopping galoshes of a jaunty co-ed. These are the things of youth. What is surprising is that those who organize our colleges and make the curriculum should take no measures to prevent the wrecking of the liberal arts course.

"The reason why they do not has already been indicated. The universities do not lead the thought of the world; they merely follow the popular trend, and the age is unblushingly materialistic. The goal that is kept constantly in mind, that is pointed out insistently to the young, is financial success. And the colleges have adapted their courses to the popular demand. The college course is the mirror of society, and the society of today, so far as literary ideals are concerned, is a decadent society."

GORDON LAING, in *The University Record*.